

**excavate my
pain (i found
peace)**

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Summary:

Richie's parents suck.

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Author's Note:

this idea came to me, and it demanded to be written. it's kind of a mash-up of pieces of canon, and my own person headcanons. the names for his parents come from headcanon and what i've seen other ppl use, too. this is set in the 2017 canon, follows as such, except for one minor change.

heed the tags!

big thanks to hannah as always for cheerleading and editing! <3

See, here's the problem.

Richie's parents suck, right? But not, like, in an *obvious* way.

They don't physically beat him, for one. He's never come into school with bruises, visible or otherwise. He's never been knocked around, not even jokingly. The only reason he's even been to the emergency room so much is entirely his own fault—and it speaks to his recklessness that no one thinks to question it, no one thinks "*this is the third time in as many months that Tozier boy has been in, maybe something is wrong* ." Because something is wrong, but it's not that his parents beat him.

They also don't deny him anything; they're normal parents, "*no you can't have that new toy, you don't need it*," or "*no, finish your dinner, then you can have dessert*." They feed him and clothe him and he's got a roof over his head that doesn't leak, not one bit. Even *Bill*'s roof leaks, so that's saying something. That's not the problem, either.

The problem is...

Well, most people would say Mr. and Mrs. Tozier are charming, if quiet. Sure, they don't go to the community events—parades and barbecues and the like—but they keep their lawn trim and their

house looking nice. They bring up property value, people say. They don't chaperone field trips or school dances, but that's because Mr. Tozier works a dutiful nine-to-five and Mrs. Tozier works hard keeping the house spic-and-span.

Oh, but when they *do* go to an event, usually Parent-Teacher nights at schools, Mr. and Mrs. Tozier are the stars of the show.

Mr. Tozier has a joke for every occasion, a quip for every poor fool's set up. He's not lewd, or crude, but he's smart and sharp and funny. People watch him in action and say "*it's no wonder where Richie gets his sense of humor from! And his cleverness!*"

Richie hates it when they say that. Because they're right as much as they are wrong. He got his quick wit from his dad sure, but their jokes are nothing alike. He and his father are nothing alike.

Mrs. Tozier, on the other hand, is soft-spoken and kind, but no less sharp than her husband. She's a lovely little homemaker, too. She's got tips and tricks to spare, and is always happy to spread her knowledge. People watch her, and sigh wistfully, and usually murmur something along the lines of "*I wish she was in our book club!*"

Richie hates this too, but not for any real reason. He just does.

The other thing he hates—perhaps hates most of all—is that Mr. and Mrs. Tozier are *so* well-liked, they're congratulated on dealing with a misfit like Richie. A misfit, that's what they all call him. And he's not saying it's true, but it isn't as if he was dropped on his parents' doorstep without warning; it wasn't as if they had another option. It isn't as if he's a misfit because he *likes* it.

Mr. and Mrs. Tozier are warmly praised for raising someone like Richie, as if he's a problem child by nature alone and nurture has had nothing to do with his foul mouth and fouler attitude.

So that's part of the problem.

The other part of the problem is what happens at home, where no one else can see. The only other people who know about it are the Losers, and one school counselor who got sacked before she could do

anything. She left Derry and never looked back, and Richie often wonders what could've happened had things been different.

Behind closed doors, Richie's parents aren't Mr. and Mrs. Tozier, happy homemakers of Derry. Behind closed doors, they're Richard and Margaret—not mom and dad, that ended years ago. Richard stays in his study, and Margaret stays in the liquor cabinet. That isn't to say they don't pay attention to Richie, just that when they do... It's not his favorite.

Richard leaves his study only to hound on Richie: about homework, about being a little queer, about this, that, and the other thing. Richie doesn't bother trying to get a word in edgewise anymore; it's just not worth the effort. It's not worth the disdainful sigh, the stony look in Richard's eyes that appears whenever Richie so much as opens his mouth. Nothing is worth the effort when everything he does just ends in disappointment.

Got a B? *Could've done better.*

Got an A? *Good, oughta always be getting those. What, you want a reward ?*

Never good enough, never smart enough, *enough enough enough* .

(Don't even get Richie started on sports; if he hears his dad mention the football team one more time, he may just actually die.)

Margaret is a whole other story; she seems to forget Richie exists most of the time. Unless they're out in public, it's as though she doesn't have a son. Hell, even in public—she's left him at the grocery store more than once, is what he's saying. Richie hasn't determined which times were intentional, and which weren't, and doesn't know if he ever will. He doesn't have the energy. Forgetful—*neglectful* , a voice in the back of his head says—or not, Margaret isn't mean. She doesn't berate him over every little mistake, every little breath he takes, but that's somehow worse.

There you have it.

Richie's parents suck, and he's got no one on his side except the

Losers.

And, really, the Losers are plenty. They know (mostly) all the right things to say, and (usually) the right times to say them. They definitely know when to whisk Richie away, at least for a weekend. His friends are enough.

Most of the time.

He loves his friends dearly, and he knows the love is returned.

But the thing is...

Bill's parents are actually pretty great. They're maybe a little high strung, a little overbearing, but not so bad. They're kind and they praise Bill and never once blame him for what happened, even though Bill blames himself a lot. They have pictures lined up on the mantle of Bill-and Georgie, of course—and they have achievements hung on the fridge. Certificates and trophies, no matter how small, can be found all over the Denbrough house. His parents *care*.

Eddie's mom is... a lot. Richie isn't trying to say she's not. Mrs. K is pretty far from a walk in the park but—but at least she pays attention to Eddie. And she never scolds him over his grades (he does that to himself plenty). She's the word-for-word definition of a helicopter parent, but Richie can't help and think that'd be better than his own mom. Better to be around too much, too worried, than not at all, right? Right.

Stan kind of gets it, at least. His mom is a treasure, but his dad is an asshole. Always putting the pressure on Stan, never taking the time to see him for the boy he is. Stan swears it's because of his bar mitsvah, becoming a man means more pressure and more responsibilities. But Richie thinks that's just a lie he tells himself to make it seem less than it is.

Even Stan's dad rewards him, though. Similar to Bill's home, the Uris house is littered with proof of Stan's accomplishments (and god, are there a lot). Mr. Uris may put a lot of pressure on Stan, but he always encourages him, too.

Then they meet Ben, and he gets it a little bit too. His mom is really sweet, he says, but his aunt and her kids are dicks. It makes Richie laugh, and then makes his heart hurt when Ben describes how his aunt calls him selfish, stupid, spoiled. Richie knows none of that is true, and he hugs him tight when Ben admits all of this to the other Losers.

Mike's a different story, too. His parents... Well. But his grandpa is familiar territory. He tells them what it's like on the farm, and Richie nods along understandingly. The pressure, the relentless battery of *you can't do anything right, can you?* How eventually the words stop sounding like a dad or a grandpa and start sounding like yourself. He and Mike bond a fair bit over it, but it doesn't last. As Mike gets better at farm work, the less his grandpa has to be mad about. The less his grandpa has to be mad about, the less Mike and Richie have to bond over.

And then there's Bev. Beverly.

He doesn't know right away what her home life was like. He only knows that after the day at the quarry, he started to feel bad about all those rumors floating around. He started to feel bad about believing them, though he never spread them. He knows—same as he knows Ben isn't selfish, really—none of them are true.

It's after they've defeated It that he finds out; hard not to, given what happened with her father. She tells them at the river that day, her aunt wants her to fly out to Portland. Before Richie can even process the words, Bev tells them she told her aunt she's staying right here. So, Bev says with a laugh and a shrug, her aunt is coming out here, instead.

Richie's heart is going to give out, he thinks. First the panic of losing Bev, getting her back, then maybe losing her again but then they aren't. His heart can't take it, not after the couple months they've had.

He reaches out and holds her hand, and she smiles at him.

She doesn't tell them about her dad that day. Well, maybe she tells Bill, that wouldn't surprise Richie. He hears about the kiss the same

night it happens and he's happy for them, he really is, even if the thought makes him feel a little empty inside. But Bev doesn't tell anyone else that day, so when she tells Richie a few days later, he treats it like a gift.

Bev shows up a few days later at Richie's window, and he follows her through town on their bikes. He follows her until their legs are burning, and eventually she veers away from the center of town onto a dirt road, and Richie follows her still. When she stops and lets her bike fall to the side, Richie does too. They leaf their bikes in the bushes and he follows her on foot until finally, there's a little stream.

"I like to come here to think," she tells him.

Richie nods and waits for her to sit—she clearly has a spot, he can tell by the way she beelines for a particular rock beside the stream—and then finds a rock of his own to sit on.

"Bill told me..." She trails off with a frown. "Your parents. He told me about your parents."

Richie stares back at her. He's a little surprised (Bill isn't one to spill others' secrets) but not mad. She was bound to find out anyway. Now that he thinks about it, her knowing is probably why she came straight to his window and didn't even bother trying to brave his parents.

"Yeah," he croaks. "They're dicks."

Bev smiles sadly. "I know it's not the same, but... my dad wasn't a good person, either." Her hands clench into fists at her sides. "He was a drunk."

Richie's heart hammers in his chest; he's never had a friend with a parent like his, not like *that*. He wants to say something but the words get tangled in his throat. Beverly doesn't seem to notice and keeps talking.

“He would drink, a-and...” Her eyes flick to him, and Richie smiles back faintly. She doesn’t return the expression, but she does keep talking. “He paid *too* much attention to me,” she says with a scowl.

And, now, Richie likes to consider himself relatively bright. He’s not as smart as maybe Stan or Bill, but he’s smart, okay? But he surprises himself with how quickly realization dawns on him, and he chokes on his next breath.

“Holy shit, Bev.” He says with wide eyes. “That’s—that’s fucking awful.”

Beverly nods along, shrugs a little bit. “It only happened when he’d been drinking,” she adds.

“They’re always drinking,” Richie replies.

Beverly’s lips pull back in a rueful grin. “Yeah.” Her reply is absent, empty.

Richie stands slowly and Bev watches him carefully. He walks over to her and, even though the ground is wet and muddy, he sits beside her. She’s on her rock, and he’s on the ground, but the height difference lets her lean on him and sigh.

“I’m sorry.” He says quietly, because it feels right to say.

“Don’t be.” Bev tells him. “It’s different, I know. Really different. But...” she heaves a great sigh. “We both still have pain, you know? Even if it’s different kinds, it’s still there. Right?” She doesn’t look up at him, but Richie looks down at her.

“Right,” he says weakly.

“It gets better,” Beverly says after a while.

“Not all of us—?” Richie cuts himself off. “It doesn’t work that way, for all of us.”

She reaches over and takes his hand; she links their fingers and his

heart leaps into his throat. “It’ll get better,” she promises. “And you’ll always have me.”

Richie’s chest tightens, and he lays his head on top of hers. “Back atcha, Bev,” he says with a wobbling voice. She doesn’t call him out on his tone, or the way his tears fall into her hair. She stays tucked close to him, and lets him cry, and doesn’t say a word.

They stay there like that into the evening, and for the first time in a long time, Richie feels content.